REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated January 13, 2005, claims 1-4 and 6-28 remain in the application. Claims 1, 6, 10, 14, 17, 21, and 25 are amended. No new matter has been introduced. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated January 13, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 6-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being as being unpatentable over Jablon, U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. US2002/0067832 A1 (hereinafter Jablon). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections in view of the claims as amended.

Independent claim 1, as amended, now recites:

A method of accessing a password comprising:
dividing the password received from a client into a plurality of pieces by taking a plurality of hashes of the password, each hash using a different salt value to obtain a plurality of hash values, from each of which a predetermined number of bits are taken to represent each password piece of the plurality of pieces;
storing each piece of the plurality of pieces of the password on a different one of a plurality of servers, each of the plurality of servers being independent from others of the plurality of servers;
separately authenticating a user at each of the plurality of servers, each of the plurality of servers transmitting the piece of the password stored at the respective server to the user when the authentication at that server is successful;
assembling the password from the password pieces transmitted from the plurality of servers; and
deleting the password and the plurality of pieces of the password from the client.

The Jablon reference discloses a system for providing improved password authentication using split keys among multiple machines. *(Jablon; Abstract)* Jablon describes a system wherein a private key U is split into three shares including a password derived share and two larger shares, X and Y. The shares of the private key U and a verifier function are used to

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provide secure communication between two users at separate machines. *(Jablon; paragraphs 20-21)*

The Jablon reference does not disclose, teach or suggest the method specified in independent claim 1, as amended. Unlike the method specified in independent claim 1, as amended, Jablon does not teach a method that includes ***"dividing the password received from a client into a plurality of pieces by taking a plurality of hashes of the password, each hash using a different salt value to obtain a plurality of hash values, from each of which a predetermined number of bits are taken to represent each password piece of the plurality of pieces."*** Instead, Jablon teaches a system in which Alice selects each of the three shares P, X, and Y which make up the private key U. *(Jablon; paragraph 21)* Alice then memorizes share P and stores share X which make up Alice's secret private key S, such that when Alice attempts to retrieve private key U, a verifier {g,V} is applied to Alice's secret private key S, which results from the bitwise exclusive-or of shares P and X and the exponentiation of share P. *(Jablon; paragraphs 21)* The verifier and Y are then stored on the receiving party's (Bob) machine. *(Jablon; paragraphs 21-22)* Nevertheless, Jablon does not teach that the password division is accomplished by taking a plurality of hashes of the password, which are subsequently used to form the respective password pieces. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, as amended distinguishes over the Jablon reference.

Claims 6, 10 14, 17, 21 and 25, all as amended recite similar limitations to independent claim1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 6, 10, 14, 17, 21, and 25 distinguish over Jablon for reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to independent claim 1.

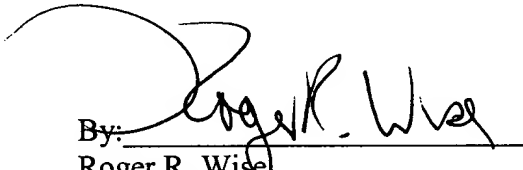Claims 2-4, 7-9, 11-13, 15-16, 18-20, 22-24, and 26-28 are directly or indirectly

dependent from independent claims 1, 6, 10 14, 17, 21 and 25, as amended, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-4, 7-9, 11-13, 15-16, 18-20, 22-24, and 26-28 distinguish over Jablon for the same reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1, 6, 10 14, 17, 21 and 25, respectively.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference call would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,
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